

African Violet

MAGAZINE



Experimenting with Fertilizer

Blossom Stalk Propagation

Report on the Cyber Diamond Celebration

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■ African Violet Magazine

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Susan Anderson

4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, Arizona

Email: president@avsa.org

As I reflect on 75 years of AVSA history, I am impressed and inspired by our previous leadership that so skillfully guided our society to today. It is my mission to develop a strategy for AVSA's future and prioritize our efforts for sustainability. And I invite you to share your ideas and suggestions as well. Together, we will build the future we want for AVSA.

Successful Cyber Convention

I hope you had a chance to participate in the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention, celebrating AVSA's 75th Anniversary. Knowing an in-person event would not be possible, a dedicated group of volunteers stepped up to the challenge and created another online experience for our members to enjoy. The Cyber Convention included almost everything you would expect of the annual convention, just in digital format.

Educational programs and tours consisted of pre-recorded videos by experts in their fields. Beautiful new introductions of African violets and other gesneriads were featured in photo galleries. The Cyber Showroom presented another outstanding gallery, showcasing the gorgeous plants and designs submitted by our members.

In the salesroom, virtual booths linked directly to vendors' websites and offered special deals for convention registrants. If you did not participate in the fun and games, you really missed out! There was a wide variety of live, interactive events for attendees. We had lots of opportunities to engage and practice our Zoom skills.

Adapting for the Future

This is a time of transition and AVSA is adapting to a changing environment. Because of this, AVSA members are becoming more skillful and capable in using available technology. I look forward to

implementing more modern features to streamline and improve efficiencies of many of our operations.

As AVSA adapts and prepares for the future, the Website, Marketing, and Fundraising committees have been converted from Special Committees to Standing Committees. The activities and responsibilities of these committees have become increasingly important to AVSA's sustainability and the AVSA Bylaws now reflect this change.

Time of Transition

There is also transition of AVSA staff. With this issue of the *AVM*, we bid fond farewell to our editor, Teresa Odle, as she retires to spend more time with her family, especially her new grandson. She has done an outstanding job and we will miss her dearly. Now, I am extremely pleased to welcome Sophia Bennett as the incoming editor. We are very excited to have her join the AVSA family. Sophia is new to growing violets, so please share your ideas and suggestions for article topics and photos. She is eager to learn and has jumped in with great enthusiasm.

I want to thank the retiring Board members for their service and welcome new Board members into the ranks. Congratulations to all the society award winners, too. Their contributions have been especially beneficial to AVSA.

Summer is here. It's time to repot and prepare for fall events. I hope you have plenty of potential show winners among your collection. As you are pruning and grooming, be sure to share some leaves and a few growing tips with others. It is the best way to spread our passion for African violets.

Happy Growing, Showing, and Sharing!



Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

Email: editor@avsa.org

This is the final issue celebrating AVSA's 75th Anniversary. I hope you were able to join the virtual celebration during the Cyber Convention a few weeks ago. Please enjoy the photo pages showing a selection of new introductions and cyber show entries; all registrants can enjoy the full selection on the AVSA website, if you haven't already. And see page 6 for a brief report on this successful online convention run by hard-working volunteers.

We also have some lengthy — but high-quality — articles to help members grow and show African violets. They include practical advice from experience and even experimenting. Topics cover lighting (page 46), fertilizer (page 10), and blossom propagation for chimeras (page 14). Stick with these great articles and you are sure to learn something.

This also is sadly my final issue as *AVM* editor as I begin to enjoy retirement and my just-born grandson. These past few years have been challenging for all of us, and I regret that I was unable to spend more time with AVSA members at conventions because of the pandemic. The regional and national conventions I attended were fun, educational and full of beautiful, healthy plants.

I have made many dear friends in the past few years and mourn those we have lost. I look forward to keeping in touch with many of you and to participating in the Albuquerque AVS, a group of fine and friendly African violet growers.

Since coming on board, I have enjoyed learning more about these diverse and beautiful plants. Most of all, I have been amazed while observing the unwavering devotion of the many AVSA members who volunteer so much of their time and talent to the Society. I also am pleased with the improvements we have made to the magazine over the years,

including the new design and new departments or columns.

I want to thank
everyone who
contributed to the
magazine over the
past three years.

There are too many AVSA champions and personal supporters to mention; I hope I have thanked you all adequately for your efforts and help. I would like to give a shout-out to Shirley Jones, our desktop publisher, who helped me immensely when I came on board. Shirley works behind the scenes, but she approaches the job with absolute dedication and an always-positive attitude.

I also want to thank everyone who contributed to the magazine over the past three years. I have been so impressed with your creativity and skills, and your willingness to give of your time and share your ideas. I'd like to thank all *AVM* advertisers, and I hope readers will take time to look at and visit the vendors' websites. (Remember, you can click on the ads in the digital version of this issue to go directly to their sites or contact information).

I wish AVSA and all of you the best and hope you can get together in Little Rock next year for a full in-person celebration. Enjoy the rest of your summer!



Incoming Editor's Notes

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

It's my great pleasure to introduce myself as the new editor of *African Violet Magazine*. I've always had tremendous fondness for these gorgeous flowers. As a child, I lived across the street from my maternal grandmother (who lived to be 102!). She kept a collection of orchids and African violets in the sunny window of her dining room — which was the happiest room in the house thanks to her amazing cooking. I was always intrigued by the shimmery surface of those violets. When she moved to a retirement community, I got to take one of those plants home with me. It sat in my kitchen window for years, a constant reminder of her gentle presence and enviable green thumb.

When I started my career as a writer, one of my first jobs was contributing to the home and garden section of my local newspaper. I loved writing about

new plant varieties, landscapes and people's relationships with living things. That gig has long since ended, so it's a real treat to return to my roots (so to speak) and write about plants again. I know I'm going to learn so much from all of you.

To give you a few more details about me, I live in Eugene, Oregon, with my husband and 8-year-old twin daughters. When I'm not working, I enjoy cooking, wine tasting, quilting, running, and reading mystery novels. I have a small vegetable garden that I tend throughout the summer, and a window full of houseplants that we enjoy year-round.

I am very open to receiving your contributions to the magazine or hearing ideas for what you'd like to read about. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with suggestions and questions.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1

- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Please send articles for the *AVM* to the editor (editor@avsa.org).

AVSA Holds Successful Cyber Diamond Celebration

More than 270 African violet enthusiasts from the United States and several countries around the world gathered virtually for the AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration held the week of May 31 through June 5. Those who registered met throughout the week to meet African violet hybridizers and *AVM* columnists and to celebrate 75 years of the Society. For example, 83 violet growers joined the first cocktail hour (via Zoom) on Monday evening with special guests Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, owners of The Violet Barn.

Participants had access to the Convention Salesroom, and could link on special offers from several AVSA Commercial Members. The New Introduction Gallery featured more than 275 new African violets and nearly 100 new other gesneriads.



"Diamonds Are Forever" Interpretive Flower Arrangement, exhibited by Cathy Willis, Ohio.

Show Entries

A total of 204 exhibits appeared in the Cyber Diamond Show. Of these, 137 pictured African violets, 48 other gesneriads, and 17 designs. The show included two special educational exhibits. Rob's Boolaroo was entered more than any other plant (six exhibits).

A total of 54 exhibitors from the United States and two other nations participated in the show, including four participants from Canada and one from Portugal. Exhibitors represented 34 AVSA Affiliate clubs. Mary Corondan offered "a heartfelt thank you to the exhibitors for entering such gorgeous plants and designs in the show."

Game Winners

Cocktail hours and committee meetings offered a chance for AVSA members to see each other on their screens. The committee added a little fun and chances to interact with a few games for attendees. Congratulations to Joan Santino, winner of the scavenger hunt, and Mary Jane DiLorenzo, Angela Comer, Alichia Warren, Mary Smith and Jacquie Eisenhut, Bingo winners.

Thanks

AVSA thanks Susan Anderson, 2021 Cyber Convention Chair, and Mary Corondan, 2021 Cyber Show Chair, for their leadership. A long list of volunteers helped Mary and Susan; they were recognized on the site, so please check the list and thank all members you know who donated time and talent to make the virtual meeting possible. "Greatest thanks to Candace Baldwin, Richard Craft, Joyce Stork, Louise Cheung, and Winston Goretsky for going way above and beyond," said Susan Anderson. This team built the website to host the convention.

AVSA also wants to thank all Commercial Members and hybridizers who participated in the convention.

Cyber Convention Show Photos



L to R: Roulette, Trudy Brekel, CO, standard; Tommie Lou, Candace Baldwin, AZ, standard; Mac's Misty Meadow, Penny Smith-Kerker, CO, semiminiature.



L to R: Wesley's Hoodoo Priestess, Linda Hall, MO, mini; Rob's Boolaroo, Sandra Skalski, NJ, trailer; S. clone *confusa* Mather E, Wilhelmina Allen, LA, species.

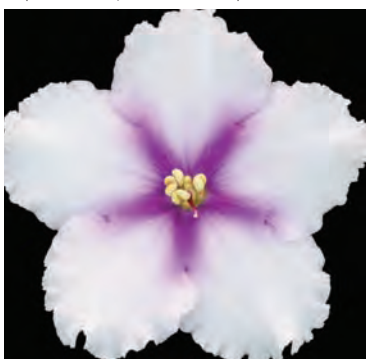


L to R: *Episcia* 'Alice's Aussie', LaDonna Hopson, VA, episcia; Jolly Pepper, Linda Sumski, MO, semimini; Arcturus, Pamela Orris, DE, standard.

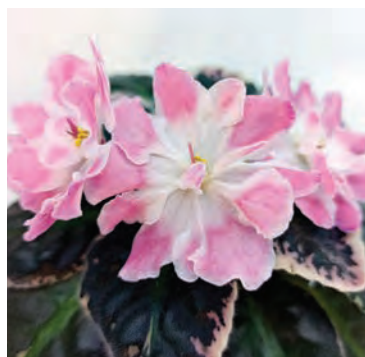
AVSA Cyber Convention: New Introductions



L to R: Malu's Hard As Nails, hybridizer Margery Anderson-Clive (Nazare, Portugal), semiminiature; LiK-Vechernie Svechi, hybridizer Galina Lazarenko (Klin, Moscow region, Russia), standard; KZ-84-21, hybridizer Irina Zaikina (Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan), standard.



L to R: Texas Stardom, hybridizer Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses (Dolgeville, New York), standard; BR-Ogon' Prometeia, hybridizers Natalia and Sergey Burkatskaie (Lugansk, Ukraine), standard; NK-Chervonii-Mak, hybridizer Natalia Kozak (Odessa, Ukraine), semiminiature.



L to R: *Streptocarpus* 'DS-2422', hybridizer Pavel Enikeev (Dnepr, Ukraine); Kev's Pink Leopard, hybridizer Kevin Degner (Wisconsin), standard; RS-Kukolka, hybridizer Svetlana Repkina (Lugansk, Ukraine), standard.

AVSA Cyber Convention: New Introductions



L to R: Jere's Tie Dye Kiss, hybridizer Jere Trigg (Alabama), standard; Star Trio, hybridizer, Nina Starostenko (Moscow, Russia), semiminiature; Steffano's Early Frost, hybridizer Stephen Covolo (Springville, California), standard.



L to R: KT-Saliut Pobedy, hybridizer, Irina Kabanova and Elena Trofimenko (St. Petersburg, Russia), standard; NiK-Morskaia Serena, hybridizer Natalia Bulko, (St. Petersburg, Russia) standard; K's Simply Put, hybridizer Kathy Hajner (New Mexico), standard.



L to R: ND-Taina, hybridizer Natalia Danilova-Suvorova (St. Petersburg, Russia), standard; VaT-Kruzhevo Vetrov, hybridizer Tatiana Val'kova (Shakhtersk, Ukraine), standard; M. Bir Numara, hybridizer Doğan Uygun (Izmir, Turkey), miniature.

An Experiment with Four Fertilizers

By Kurt Jablonski Miami Beach, Florida

The 2020 pandemic blues were slow to set in but hit me like a ton of bricks rather quickly last year when I found myself — like many people around the world — forced to take a “staycation” from mid-March until October. The first few weeks at home felt like a much-needed break. I caught up on all my favorite shows, did my spring cleaning and repotted my entire African violet collection.

Cabin Fever Led to Poor Plant Care

Unfortunately, the novelty soon wore off and I found myself going stir-crazy from cabin fever. I never dreamed I'd be home as long as I was; it was truly a terrifying situation. The absolute worst part was finding out convention and all our other shows were cancelled. These events are always highlights of my year; I so look forward to exhibiting and seeing my violet family on these occasions. My motivation to care for my plants disappeared and I became depressed at the thought of having nothing to look forward to for another year or longer.

As a result, I slacked off on my daily care of show plants because I thought ... “I’ll do it tomorrow,” or “it’s ok if I wait to repot,” because there was no show coming up. I managed to throw water on my plants but on more than one occasion some of the leaves were so dry, they fell down around the pot from wilting. This really was unusual behavior for me. I am normally like a hawk watching my plants.

To stop from becoming a permanent part of the couch, in mid-April, I forced myself to get my act together and do some experiments that I had been wanting to try on my plants. Like many growers, I am always looking for ways to perfect my show plants. My principal experiment was with fertilizer. I was curious to determine whether different fertilizers really affect the color, size and shape of the blooms.

Experimenting With Fertilizers

I started the experiment with around 10 plants of Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler and seven different fertilizers. For the purpose of this article, I chose to focus on just four fertilizers. I selected this particular hybrid because it is one of my favorite African violets, and it is grown and shown all over the world. However, almost every time I see this Buckeye in a show, no two plants look the same. I wanted to find out why they all looked so different and what might be causing the differences.

I’ve spoken with Pat Hancock about this variety and we both feel that the culture of the plant plays a huge part, however, repeated propagation over the years from older outside leaves has deteriorated the strain. Finally, somewhere down the line, it is likely someone mislabeled another Buckeye as Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler.

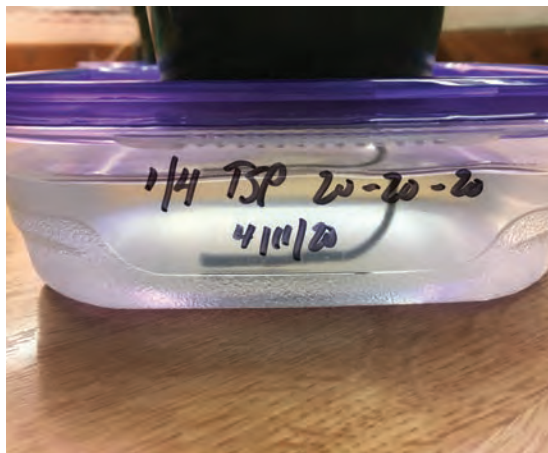


Photo 1. Water reservoir marked with record of date and fertilizer used.

For the experiment, all the plants were in 4-inch pots and had bloomed once before to make sure they were true to the variety. For the fertilizers, I chose Peter’s 20-20-20, Jack’s Peat-Lite 15-16-17,

Dyna-Gro 7-9-5 and ferti•lome 20-20-20. I grow mostly variegated violets, which is why I chose balanced fertilizers for this experiment. I feel that this gives the variegates all the necessary nutrients in the desired quantities.

I wick-watered each plant on individual reservoirs and fertilized at 1/4 teaspoon fertilizer per gallon of reverse osmosis water. On the side of the reservoir, I wrote the date I began the experiment, along with the fertilizer (see Photo 1). All other factors such as soil, light, temperature and humidity were constant.

Results

My hypothesis was that each plant would indeed show differences in the size, color, variegation and texture of the leaves, as well as in the background color of the blossoms, the edge and the fantasy markings. Within 4 weeks, I began to notice the plants forming bloom stems and the emerging of new center leaves. At the beginning of May, it was clear that I would prove my hypothesis and each plant was going to exhibit unique growth patterns from the different fertilizers.

I was extremely excited to see how these plants would bloom and how the leaves would develop over the next few months as the plants got older. Even today, the experiment continues and no two of the Buckeye Cranberry Sparklers are identical.

As I expected, each plant bloomed differently, which is clear in the photos I have included with this article. Photo 2 shows the bloom of one plant fertilized with Peter’s 20-20-20. The flower is a gorgeous semidouble pink, has a beautiful edge and lovely fantasy markings. Photo 3 is a close-up of the bloom on one plant that was fertilized with Jack’s Peat-Lite Special 15-16-17. It is interesting



Photo 2. Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler blooms fertilized with Peter’s 20-20-20. Photo 3. Close-up of Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler blooms after fertilizing with Jack’s Peat-Lite Special 15-16-17.



Photo 4. Results after fertilizing Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler with Dyna-Gro 7-9-5. Photo 5. Bloom on Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler fertilized with ferti•lome 20-20-20.

because although this blossom has the edge and nice fantasy markings, it is a much lighter background color and does not have the extra middle petal.

Dyna-Gro 7-9-5 was used on the plant in Photo 4, and you can see that this blossom is lovely, but it does not show any of the fantasy markings that this cultivar usually displays. Finally, Photo 5 was fertilized with ferti•lome 20-20-20. The blossom is an almost solid red with only a few flecks of light pink. It appears that the dark color of the edge and fantasy overtook the lighter pink background color. Suffice it to say all the blossoms on the test plants are different.

After experimenting for more than a year, I have decided that the Peter's 20-20-20 works the best for my conditions. It is a balanced formula that has given my African violets beautiful flowers and dark green healthy foliage. I now feel confident in saying that fertilizer is the number one factor that determines how the plants will grow. You must choose a fertilizer that best suits your needs.

Final Thoughts

If you want one all-purpose fertilizer or several different formulas for different types of plants, that

is a personal preference. Mostly it depends on your schedule, size of the collection and your particular style of growing. As human beings, we change when we do not eat a balanced diet. We can become obese if we eat too many sweets or too skinny if we starve ourselves of the necessary nutrients needed to fuel our bodies.

Plants are no different, and if fertilized with either element in unbalanced amounts, they too will display differences in their growth habits. Now on to the next experiment!



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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

S. 8 clone *rupicolus* 'Cha Simba'

Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme
Species

African Violet Blossom Stalk Propagation

By Paula Bal West Windsor, New Jersey

One of the most common methods of propagating African violets is from leaf cuttings. Because the genetic makeup is the same throughout the plant, the babies produced from leaf cuttings will be identical to the mother plant in most solid, bicolor and fantasy blossom plants. However, this is not true of African violet chimeras (pronounced ki-me-ra), as the individual plant cells of chimeras are genetically different. Because of this difference, leaf cuttings taken from chimeras are rarely identical to the plant from which the cutting was taken.



Image 1. The Alps I grow and its chimera blossoms.

Propagating Chimeras

Chimeras in the African violet world also are known as “pinwheel,” or striped blossom plants. In nature, a chimera is a mixture of tissue with a different genetic constitution in the same part of an organism that usually arises from a genetic mutation. In violets, this type of genetic mutation causes the stripe or pinwheel in blossoms.

The stripe colors are two entirely different genetic materials represented in one blossom. The genetic materials in these blossoms are twisted or fused together like a candy cane. These different genetic

materials are located in the flowers, crown and main stalk of an African violet chimera plant.

Since these pinwheel violets do not propagate true from leaf cuttings, there are several methods to propagate these plants to yield plantlets that will bloom true to the description of the mother plant:

- Suckers.** The baby plantlets that spontaneously appear at the base of an African violet are suckers. This does not happen often in most varieties of single-crowned plants. You can increase the chance of suckers forming by poking holes with a small pin at the base of the main stem or neck of the plant. The suckers will produce plants that will bloom true in approximately 9 to 12 months, depending on your growing conditions.

- Crowning.** Removing the center of the plant, also known as the crown, produces suckers from the center crown. Removing the crown sends the plant into “survival mode.” The mother plant will spend all its energy producing babies from the cut-out center. This is a fast way to propagate a chimera, however, the mother plant will never return to a single-crowned plant and then can only be used to propagate new plants.

The cut-out portion can be rooted if you carefully leave a portion of the main stem intact. For show growers, this is a disadvantage because a sucker and main crown cutting will take about one year to grow into a show plant. If using this method of crowning, remove only the center by carefully slicing through a portion of the main neck/stem of the plant and leave at least three to four leaves in the outer row. Place the entire beheaded plant in a Ziploc bag and wait until suckers form, then separate the plantlets into individual pots once they are large enough to handle.

- Blossom stalk propagation.** Since the two types of genetic material in chimeras are in the blossoms of the flower, you can use the blossom stalks to

propagate new plants without damaging the mother plant. This method is definitely more time-consuming. It takes an average of 4 to 6 months to produce small babies from the flower stalks and can take an additional 9 months to a year to produce flowers once the babies are potted up. This method requires more patience from the grower, but you might prefer it to destroying the original plant by crowning (especially if it is a single-crowned variety) or would like to continue to grow your plant for shows. This can also work for fantasy violets that do not propagate true from leaf cuttings consistently (such as Rebel's Splatter Kake).

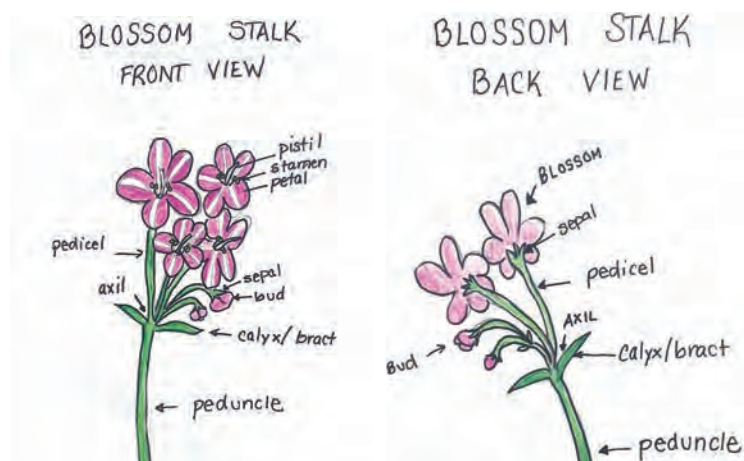


Image 2. My drawing of blossom anatomy, front and back.

Tips for Successful Blossom Stem Propagation

Here are some tips for making blossom stem propagation work for you:

- Many growers root blossom stalks directly in a peat-based mix or long-fibered sphagnum moss. However, in my experience, the blossom stalks rot before they produce plantlets.
- Rooting in water requires an extra step but increases the success rate in my growing conditions (under fluorescent lights, room temperature 70 to 75 degrees, 50 percent humidity) to a rate of 75 to 90 percent success. Dale Martens also has been using this method with similar success rates.
- Use a violet that has larger bracts or calyxes (see Image 2). To encourage larger bracts/calyxes, snip off the blossoms and buds while the blossom stalk remains on the mother plant for a few weeks to a month. This will encourage the calyxes to grow larger, getting energy from the mother plant. Larger

bracts increase success rate in producing plantlets by blossom stem propagation. (I have tried leaving the blossom stalk on the plant using Keiki Grow Plus but have not had success in producing plantlets).

- Do not use pale, brown or soft bloom stalks. Try to use fresher stalks
- Use clean instruments, clean hands and/or gloves, clean pots and a clean medium (either soilless mix, a mix of perlite and vermiculite, or long fibered sphagnum moss).
- Adding Keiki Grow Plus is not necessary but can increase success rate. Use a tiny amount of this product; a little goes a long way. (Look for very small quantities online, since it can be expensive and only has a 2-year shelf life). Keiki Grow contains a plant hormone, cytokinin, plus vitamins and lanolin. This product will increase plantlet production. Keiki Grow is most often used to produce baby plantlets on orchids.

Step-by-Step Blossom Stem Propagation

Step 1: Remove the entire flower stalk by pulling the stalk gently sideways. It will separate from the leaf axil (Image 3).



Image 3. Ness' Mini Sota, a semimini single chimera white sticktite pansy with a fuchsia stripe.



Image 4 (left). Cut the peduncle and pedicel. Image 5 (center). Stalks ready for propagating. Image 6 (right). Add a hormone preparation like Keiki Grow Plus.

Step 2: Using an X-Acto knife, cut the peduncle (below the bract/calyx) about 1 inch, if possible, and cut the pedicel about 1/4 to 1/2 inch above the bract/calyx. Throw away the blossoms (Image 4).

Step 3: Blossom stalks are ready for propagating (Image 5). Gently hold the peduncle of the stalk and use a small pin to poke a few shallow holes where the calyx/bract meets the pedicel on both sides. Be careful not to damage the bracts, just nick the surface. Dip the head of the same pin in Keiki Grow Plus or Pro (Image 6). Apply a tiny amount (about the size of the tip of the pin). Place the Keiki Grow over the hole you made in the calyx/pedicel node (Image 7).

Step 4: Purchase craft foam at an art supply store. You can use prefabricated cutouts or a large thin sheet of craft foam. It should be thin; thicker foam will not work as well. Cut a few small holes with an

X-Acto knife; the holes should be large enough to place the stalk through, but small enough that the stalk will not fall through the hole. The foam in the photos had pre-cut holes. Foam should be large enough to float the stalks in water. The peduncle should be underwater, and the bracts should be on top of the foam, but not under the water. It is OK for the water to make contact with the bract, but it should not be completely submerged (Image 8).

Step 5: Label and date the foam with permanent marker or place a piece of electrical tape with the name and date written on the jar or container you prepare in step 6 (Image 9).

Step 6: Prepare a clean, sterilized jar or reservoir and fill it halfway with distilled water (Image 10). Alternately, you can use algae water, as Dale Martens does to root her blossom stems using the method above.

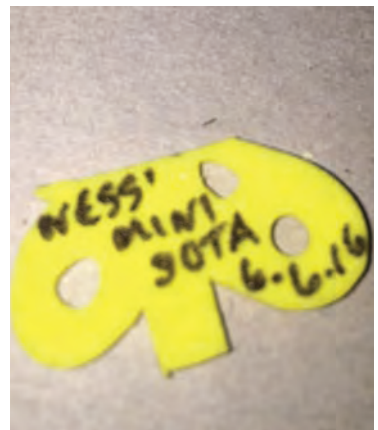


Image 7 (left). Add a tiny amount of Keiki Grow to the hole in the calyx/pedicel node. Image 8 (center). Thin foam from craft store. Image 9 (right). Labeled and dated foam.



Image 10 (left). Glass jar filled with distilled water. Image 11 (center and right). Photos by Dale Martens show how she places her blossom stalks in thin foam.

Dale has had success cutting a larger sheet of foam floating in a quart-sized plant reservoir filled with algae water with several stalks floating on the foam like a lily pad. (See Image 11).

Step 7: Gently place the bloom stalks through the holes in the foam so the calyx is touching the top of the foam and the peduncle is through the hole.

Step 8: Float the foam and blossom stalks in water. Cover the jar with plastic wrap, poke a few holes in the top of the wrap for air circulation and then place it under fluorescent lights until you see roots form. Make sure the plastic wrap does not touch the top of the blossom stalks (Image 12).

Step 9: Approximately 2 to 3 months later, you will see roots extending from the blossom stalk and you might even see tiny plantlets forming (Image 13). You can allow the plants to form baby plantlets in the

water, however, I find rooting them in soil at this stage has worked better in my conditions.

Prepare a clean 1- to 2-inch pot with drainage holes and feed a nylon/acrylic wick into the drainage holes through the pot (Image 14).

Put a 1/4- to 1/2- inch perlite layer in the bottom of the pot (referred to as Texas Style potting, Image 15).

Label and date the pot, fill the pot with soilless peat mix, mixed with 50 percent perlite or long-fibered sphagnum moss. Moisten the soil, but make sure it is not soaked (Image 16).

Step 10: Use a pencil to make a hole in the soil and plant the rooted stalk(s). Do not bury the stalk too deep; the calyx/bract node should be in line with the top of the soil line (Image 17).

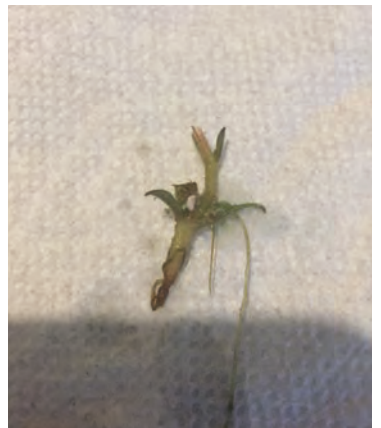


Image 12 (left). Float the stalks in water. Image 13 (center and right). Roots forming on a plantlet in the water (left) and ready to place in soil (right).



Image 14 (left). Prepare a small pot and wick. Image 15 (center). Place a perlite layer in the bottom. Image 16 (right). Pot filled and moistened.



Image 17 (top left). Stalk lightly placed in pencil-made hole. Image 18 (bottom left). Pots sealed in plastic bag.

Images 19, 20. Plantlets forming at the calyxes/bracts.

Step 11: Place the pots in a Ziploc bag and fill the bag with air by blowing into it with a straw. Seal the bag, then place it under bright fluorescent lights (not in direct sun) (Image 18).

Approximately 1 to 2 months later, you will see a baby plantlet forming at one, possibly both calyxes/bracts. (Images 19 and 20).

Step 12: Prepare a small pot (1 to 2 inches) the same way as described in step 9 (labeled and dated). When the plantlet leaves are the size of a dime, remove them from the rooted stalk. Discard the stalk or try re-rooting it if it is still viable. Using your fingers, bent-nosed tweezers or an X-Acto knife, gently pry the baby plantlet from the calyx/axil node on the blossom stem.

Pot the individual plantlet(s) in the pot you prepared and place them in a Ziploc bag again. As the plantlet gets larger, incrementally repot. It will probably take 9 to 12 months to produce a flowering plant, but blossoms should be true to the plant description (Image 21).



Image 21. A thriving plantlet.

I hope you try blossom stem propagation to increase your chimera collection, share rare varieties with friends or create backups of prized chimeras in your collection. Happy growing!

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$45

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

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In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

If you followed the recommendation in the last issue to make some crosses between your plants, hopefully you have some seedpods to watch. The seedpods are the “fruit” of the African violet plant. The fruits are boring to watch; they stay green for 4 to 6 months and don’t change size much after the first couple of weeks. Instead of turning a bright color when ripe, they dry up and turn brown.

The fruits of African violets are not designed to attract animals, so there is no need to turn color or become soft and full of sugar to attract seed-eating animals that scatter the seed. The African violet fruit’s purpose is to protect the seeds until the next rainy season arrives. Ripening of the African violet fruit is signaled by drying up and becoming brown.

Many hybridizers remove the seedpods at this point and place them in a container in a warm environment to complete the drying process. After 2 to 3 weeks, the seedpods can be broken open and the seeds released for germinating. Each fruit or seedpod should contain 50 to 300 seeds, so don’t plant all of the seeds at once. If you are not ready to plant immediately, store dried fruits in a small vial with silica desiccant to prevent mold growth. Seeds can be stored in the dried fruit under these conditions for several months. If carefully dried and refrigerated, the seeds should remain viable for 2 to 3 years.

Q: In most animal breeding, it is a requirement to show the pedigree of the parents back for several generations. Some plant societies also require a pedigree when registering hybrids. Is there a reason why this is not the practice for African violets?

A: A quick answer to this question is that in its early history, the African Violet Society of America did not choose to require public pedigrees when registering

plants. Registration was a closed process between the hybridizer and the society. The registration application requested the parents of a new hybrid, but the information was not put in the public domain. Without that information, pedigrees did not take on the importance that they have in other organizations, such as with animal breeding.

Each fruit or seedpod
should contain 50 to
300 seeds...

Another factor that complicates the use of pedigrees in plant breeding is that hybridizers often used their own unnamed or unregistered hybrids when working toward a goal. This is a perfectly acceptable practice in plant breeding — the intermediate individuals are not the final product and might not be seen as worthy of registration. Putting these “undescribed” plants into a pedigree chart doesn’t convey useful information to outsiders, making the charts of very limited value to anyone but the hybridizer.

From the genetic point of view, I’ve always had a problem with the use of pedigree charts. The process that produces the sex cells through meiosis is designed to maximize the mixing of the genes being passed on to the next generation. After two generations, the amount of genetic information that was actually inherited from a grandparent (parent to F1 to F2 generations) might be calculated to be around 25 percent, but the value has a wide range. This is approximately 25 percent of all the traits that were in that grandparent — the good traits and the bad traits. In fact, the odds are significantly against the

F2 offspring inheriting any good traits from the grandparent. Sexual reproduction is designed to maximize the mixing of all the available traits, not concentrate the “good traits” into one offspring.

The only information I can see a pedigree chart providing is if an individual has a hidden recessive trait. If one of the parents had the recessive trait, then you can be nearly certain that the F1 offspring is heterozygous for the recessive trait. Crossing the F1 offspring to another individual that shows the recessive trait provides a high probability of getting the recessive trait back out in at least some of the next generation of offspring. Without that direct evidence, it is usually impossible to know for certain if an individual carries a recessive trait. Only looking at their immediate parents or their offspring can give you a clue.

For example, knowing that a plant several generations back had pink flowers tells you nothing about whether a plant still carries the trait for pink flowers. The pedigree suggests that pink flowers might be possible, but recessives can be hidden for many generations without being expressed. When you are short on space and a generation takes about a year in African violets, there are better ways to plan your crosses.

For these reasons, I like to suggest hybridizers work with plants that already show the traits they wish to combine. If the traits have been identified on the list of dominant/recessive traits, you have much better chances of predicting what the offspring will look like. Crossing a plant with blue flowers with another plant with blue flowers and hoping to get pink-flowered offspring is not a good use of your time and resources. Crossing a plant with pink flowers with a blue-flowered plant that had a pink-flowered parent is a much better cross if your goal is to get pink flowers. At least in this case, you have a good chance to get pink-flowered offspring.

Q: Any suggestions on breeding for micro-minis?

A: I would suggest following the same plan used for breeding any African violet with a goal of small size. Cross the smallest with the smallest and keep the smallest offspring for the next round of breeding. This will reduce the size of the individuals after a

couple of generations. Just be sure that the “small size” is due to genetics, not to something like lack of fertilizer or other poor growing conditions. Genetics for small size can be inherited, but response to a poor growing environment will result in large plants once the stress is removed.

Double-petaled flowers often are sterile.

Q: I have a plant with double-petaled flowers that lack anthers, but have a pistil. I have another plant with double-petaled flowers that lack pistils but produce a few stamens. The first plant is male sterile; the second plant is female sterile. Can I cross the two together and have a chance at a fertile seed pod?

A: Double-petaled flowers often are sterile due to converting the sexual parts into extra petals. Having two plants that seem to be reciprocal in their sterility is not unknown, but it takes a good eye to notice the difference. I would suggest making several crossing attempts to see what happens. Your pollen viability might be low and the pistils may appear normal but be nonfunctional. However, perhaps there is enough normalcy left in the flowers to be successful with some crossing attempts. If you do get a seedpod with viable seeds, I would predict that the offspring will have double-to-triple petals and be sexually sterile. This might be a cross to get a high petal count, but it will likely be a dead end as a breeding program.

Q: All of the genetic trait lists I've seen list “fantasy” as a dominant trait. I've made crosses using a fantasy parent, but none of the offspring are showing any suggestion of fantasy markings in the flowers. What has gone wrong?

A: This has been a most interesting case and I thank the writer for sharing the details of the cross. The hybridizer has grown out nearly 100 offspring and not one has shown the fantasy markings found in the flowers of the parent. There have been some plants with bicolor flowers and some with white edging, but no offspring with the fantasy marks of the parent.

This is a case where I cannot explain the results of this cross. In all other cases of which I am aware, fantasy is a dominant trait that usually penetrates to approximately half of the offspring. In this cross, about 50 of the offspring should have shown fantasy markings, yet none have appeared. The problem is not the sample size, but something working differently than expected in the cross.

I do not know why there have been no fantasy-marked offspring from this cross. However, fantasy is a weird trait and has shown many inconsistencies. One, for example, is failing to come true to type by leaf cuttings. Something unusual has occurred in this cross and perhaps time will eventually show an explanation to these very atypical results.

The Seeds Keep a Long Time ... a Very Long Time

By Robert Ferland Lévis, Quebec, Canada

Like many of you, it all started with a gift of an African violet. I found this a wonderful plant. Gradually, with the help of information and advice from *African Violet Magazine*, I set up a growing space in the basement: shelves, fluorescent lights, etc. I started reproducing plants by taking leaf cuttings and removing suckers.

Hybridizing and Recordkeeping

Each new violet had its own characteristics and I thought it would be interesting to get an African violet that would combine some characteristics of one with those of another. So, in 2006, I started to hybridize my plants. I did this exercise as rigorously as possible: recording for each hybridization attempt the name of

the pollen parent, the name of the pod or seed parent, and the date of harvesting the seeds.

I then stored these envelopes in an airtight jar ... in the refrigerator.

I had read in gardening articles that seeds that had been stored well in a dry and cool place could last a few years. I made small paper envelopes (see Photo 1) identifying the information about the hybridization. I then stored these envelopes in an airtight jar with a layer of dry beans in the bottom to absorb moisture (see Photo 2) and put this jar in the refrigerator. During the first few years, I would take an envelope from this pot and sow the seeds. I did not achieve great miracles but I had some beautiful surprises in the seedlings.



Photo 1. Envelope with seed ID info. Photo 2. Jar of seedlings for refrigeration.

A Pause in Growing

First, there was a house move. The optimal light conditions changed greatly and reduced my activities cultivating African violets.



Photo 3. Hundreds of seedlings from seeds stored for 14-plus years on March 23, 2021. Photo 4. Thinned seedlings on April 17.

A second house move gave me back a cultivation space that allowed me to resume my hybridizing. I still had a dozen of the 2006 seedpod envelopes left. Before I threw everything away, I did a test, a

last-ditch attempt to check the viability of the seeds. I germinated the contents of two large seed pods from the following parents: Optimara Ontario (parent pollen) x Lyons’s Spectacular (parent pod).

Viable Seeds Years Later

Surprise! After 14 1/2 years of dormancy, you can see the result ... hundreds of small plants (see Photo 3). Having limited space, I kept the strongest seedlings at each stage. I now have 13 growing violets (see Photo 4).

It is my intention to test the other hybridizations that I have left. The results I’ve obtained make me hopeful for nice surprises again.

And I wanted to share with readers that if stored properly, African violet seeds can last a very long time!

I thank Dr. Jeffrey Smith for reviewing this article.

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My First Violets: Choosing Your First Violets

By Sandra Skalski Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Email: sskalski@comcast.net

I hope you are enjoying learning about the basics of African violet care. This month, let's spend some time getting to know the plants themselves. Did you know there are more than 20,000 named varieties of African violets? There are thousands of unnamed varieties as well. Sadly, you can't grow all of them, although some growers give it a good try. So, which varieties should you choose?

African Violet Types

African violets are divided into four main types. The first most people encounter are standard plants. They have a single crown, which means they have one main growing point in the center of the plant, and they grow as a flat rosette. Standard plants might grow to 12 or 15 inches in diameter. Large varieties are a subcategory of standard plant. The leaves on large-growing cultivars might become as big as your hand, and the plants can reach 18 to 24 inches in diameter.

Semiminiature and miniature plants also grow as single-crowned plants. However, semiminiature plants typically measure 8 inches or less, and miniatures grow to 6 inches or less. Mature microminiature varieties can be about 2 inches or less in diameter.

Trailing African violets have multiple crowns, meaning they grow new leaves and blossoms from more than one position on the plant. Some trailers become very thick and bushy, while others grow long trails and might even be grown cascading around the pot. Most are good bloomers. Trailers are further classified as standard, miniature and semiminiature. In the case of trailers, the classification refers to the leaf size, not the plant size. Miniature trailers can grow quite large, and some have been grown in 12-inch pots or larger.

The final type of plant is the African violet species. These are not cultivars, but the natural species as found in the wild. They grow as single-crown plants or trailers, and in a variety of leaf sizes and shapes. Some are shy bloomers, but others are floriferous and make lovely specimen plants, especially in natural light.

Your personal taste
will help you decide
which plants you want
to grow.

Where to Start

Your personal taste will help you decide which plants you want to grow. Do you like blues and purples, or pinks and red? Do you like blossoms with fantasy spots, or a white or purple edge? Do you prefer full, double blossoms or simpler single ones? Do you like wavy foliage or leaves that lay flat? How about light green leaves, or dark green and variegated? Is there a narrow windowsill perfect for miniature African violets in your kitchen, or do you have room for some large plants? The selection can be overwhelming, so where do you start?

First, you will need a place to buy some plants. AVSA Commercial Members are excellent sources of beautiful varieties. Find some of their ads in this magazine, and links on the AVSA website (www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org/shop/commercial-vendors/). Some of our AVSA members hybridize and sell their plants on social media. Many grocery chains and big-box stores also sell violets.

If you buy your plants there, try to avoid those that are exposed to outdoor plants, since pests such as thrips are happy to hitch a ride on a breeze or someone's clothes and land right on the violet section.

Always buy healthy plants. If you see a plant that looks stressed or unhealthy in any way, pass it by. Perhaps you can help it recover, but it might bring a pest or disease into your growing environment. Don't take a chance. Wherever you buy your plants, it's important to isolate them from the rest of your collection until you are sure they are free from pests and diseases.

Start Small and Smart

Acquiring new plants is exciting and fun. Enjoy your new additions, but know when to say when, both in the number of plants you collect and the price you are willing to pay for them. Be sure you have the time to dedicate to the regular care of your plants. And before you set your sights on the latest, the rarest and the hardest-to-find African violets, be sure you have the skills to care for them. Practice on common varieties. If there's anything worse than losing a plant, it's losing a plant you paid dearly for.

AVSA has some terrific resources to help you choose plants that are reliable growers and bloomers. Each year, members vote on their favorite plants. The results are tabulated and published as the Best Varieties list (see *AVM*, November/December 2020, page 26). The list includes plants that do well for many people, so it's a good place to look for new cultivars to try. Plants that make the Best Varieties list for 3 consecutive years are placed on the Honor Roll of African Violets. A few of these exceptional varieties belong in your collection.

Plant Identification

Many beautiful African violets have no name. We refer to these plants as NOIDS, which stands for No ID. Perhaps the name was lost or maybe the plant was propagated and produced a sport. A sport is a plant produced from vegetative propagation that is not identical to the parent plant. Sometimes a sport is an improvement on the original plant, such as a chimera. Chimeras typically have striped blossoms and require propagation from a sucker or a bloom stem in order to bloom true to the variety.

Sometimes, people will try to identify a NOID. Since there are many thousands of cultivars, many of which look similar, it is virtually impossible to do so accurately. Don't be upset if you request help identifying a plant and are told that you have a NOID. Misidentified plants can create confusion down the line, especially if the plant was propagated under the wrong name and somehow entered into a show. There is nothing wrong with growing a NOID. Enjoy your beautiful plant. It doesn't need a name to bloom and grow for you.

AVSA also provides a program called First Class, which is a database of cultivars, including a description, the hybridizer and the year the plant was introduced. Using the program, you can make lists of your plants and even print full-color labels. Many of the cultivars in the database have a registration number. AVSA is the authorized International Cultivar Registration Authority for the African violet. If you are the hybridizer or identify a sport, you can register the cultivar, provided you have shown that you have reproduced the plant asexually through three successive generations.

Caring for New Plants

What if a couple of varieties are not doing well for you? First, be sure that you are following the 10 Proper for good growing. (See *AVM*, May/June 2019, page 42). Check for signs of pests or diseases. If you find nothing wrong, consider that this particular variety might not like your conditions. I have tried many times to grow Pride of Columbus, a popular semiminiature variety. It doesn't like my cooler growing conditions, so I will leave that one to other growers. Pass on the plants that do not like your conditions and make some room for your next favorites.

I hope you are excited to try some new varieties of African violets. Try something different once you feel comfortable. If you grow standard plants, try a trailer, a miniature, or even a species. Early fall is a great time to order plants from your favorite source, as the weather is cooler during the day, but not too cold at night. Make a list of plants you want to try. Your new favorite plant is out there. Happy hunting and happy growing!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lunar Lily White

Exhibited by: Diane Miller
Hybridized by: J. Dates
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Jolly Eyes

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Imp's Blue Arsenic

Exhibited by: Peggy Mooney
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Miniature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Imp's Lil' Deathcap

Exhibited by: Lucera DeWilde
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Miniature

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$9,244

Booster Donations support AVSA ongoing general expenses.

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North Texas AV Judges Council, TX

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN

Sue Ramser, Wichita Falls, TX

In honor of Amy Carruth and Teresa Odle

Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN

Joyce Stork, Henderson, NV

■ \$50 to \$99

Bay State AVS, MA

Dreama Bigio, Norfolk, VA

In honor of Nancy Brooks, a loving mother

Leslie Breen, Houston, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland,

Johnny Williams, and Gary Thurman

Vickie Crider, Humble, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland

Vickie Crider, Humble, TX

In memory of Gary and Rhona Thurman

First AVS of Denton, TX

First AVS of Wichita Falls, TX

Norma Flynn, Montgomery, TX

Susan Gimblet, Fall River, MA

Joyce Groh, Lebanon, PA

Patricia Huffman, Carmichaels, PA

Janet Newburgh, Woodville, FL

James Spittel, Aurora, Ontario

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Gary Thurman

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Johnny Williams

■ \$25 to \$49

Rosalyn Barclay, Ann Arbor, MI

In honor of Alice Phelps

Erin Charles, Flower Mound, TX

In memory of Emma Lee Chapman

Donna Christianson, Fargo, ND

Patricia De La Torre, Spring, TX
In memory of Mary McFarland
Shawn Edwards, Las Vegas, NV
First Austin AV Society, TX
In memory of Lynn Sissney
Marian McGath, Omaha, NE
Suzanne Myers, Clarkesville, GA
Omaha AV and Gesneriad Society, NE
In memory of the deceased
members of the Omaha Society
Diane Reinke, Silver Spring, MD
Emilia Rykowski, Pompton Plains, NJ

■ **Under \$25**

Penny Allen, Port Orchard, WA
Lori Blotz, Mukwonago, WI

Lois Buschke, Morris Plains, NJ
Margaret Califano, Latham, NY
Lisa Cobb, San Diego, CA
Margaret Crawford, Brighton, MA
Milly Donahue, Torrance, CA
Victoria Frey, Howe, OK
Tanya Iverson, Champlin, MN
Marion Martin, Columbia, SC
Rosemary Nestra, Broomfield, CO
James Schade, Bedford, OH
Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN
Kathleen Spracklen, Eugene, OR
Geneva Stagg, Germantown, TN
Mary Vasconcelles, Springfield, IL
Martin Wright, Williamsville, NY

“Perfectly Pittman” Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids,
growing techniques, growing spaces and
AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

**Available in the
AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20**



Family Portrait: ¥*Achimenantha* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, Ohio

Email: melsgrice@gmail.com

¥*Achimenantha* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ is an example of one of my favorite gesneriads. The plant makes a strong statement with attractive, dark green, serrated foliage. The bold, bright red corolla and broad, yellow face spotted with red demand your attention. Jeanne Krieger hybridized this intergeneric gesneriad. She crossed an *achimenes* plant with a *smithiantha* plant, both rhizomatous gesneriads.

About ¥*Achimenantha*

The “¥” in ¥*Achimenantha* indicates it is a cross between two genera — *Achimenes* and *Smithiantha*. The resulting name is a combination of the two genus names. Some growers incorrectly add an apostrophe to Northwoods in this plant’s name. It should read just Northwoods because Jeanne Krieger is from the Great Northwoods forest area of the Great Lakes region. She used the alpha name “Northwoods” for her streptocarpus hybrids as well.

¥*Achimenanthas* have rhizomatous root structures. Rhizomes are one of the three root structures found in gesneriads, the other two being fibrous-only and tuberous structures. Rhizomes actually are modified stems and they grow perpendicular to the force of gravity.

Scaly rhizomes are produced under the soil when conditions are favorable. Scaly rhizomes often resemble pine cones and help the plants remain alive during the dry season in the wild. They perform the same function as a tuber or bulb so **do not** discard the pot if the plant looks dead — it is only resting or dormant.

Propagation

¥*Achimenantha* propagation is by stem cuttings in water or soilless mix. Stem cuttings root very quickly, sometimes within days. Rhizomes can be planted whole, in pieces, or by removing individual scales and planting them. Bear in mind that some rhizomatous plants are shy rhizome producers, so don’t assume that a pot will be full of rhizomes for the future. Always take some stem cuttings to be sure to keep the variety.



¥*Achimenantha* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ grown and photographed by Terri Vicenzi.

A crucial factor in rhizome production is keeping the plants consistently well fed and watered. If excess drying occurs too early in the growth cycle, the plants might go dormant prematurely without producing any rhizomes for next year. I try to have two or more pots of a variety growing so that I won’t lose the variety if I occasionally forget to water a tray of plants. I try to place each pot in a different part of my plant room so that they receive water on different days.

Most rhizomatous plants do not have a required dormancy period like some gesneriads do. If pruned back to the soil level after flowering, they usually will sprout again immediately if they have made new scaly rhizomes. Thus, they can be kept going throughout the year with the proper light and warmth levels.

Growing ¥*Achimenantha*

Terri Vicenzi, from Indiana, grew the plant in the photo. She says, “I’ve attempted growing ¥*Achimenantha* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ a few times. Initially, the rhizomes were stubborn to root, and I was only able to coax it out of dormancy by separating and planting the individual rhizome scales.

“I had a young, blooming plant within a few months, but it failed to produce any additional foliage and promptly died. I was not wick watering at that time,

and I believe a period of dryness may have been the issue. Luckily, I had saved a few tip cuttings and started over once again.

**Do not discard the pot
if the plant looks dead.**

“This time, I wick watered from the very beginning, and grew it relatively pot bound (3-inch pot) and very close to three T8 fluorescent bulbs. It bloomed for many weeks in the fall.”

Congratulations to Article Contest Winners

By Teresa Odle

The 2020-2021 AVM article contest has ended and the winners were announced during the Cyber Diamond Celebration. Congratulations to:

Terri Vicenzi: 1st Place

Growing Healthy African Violets — The Root of the Issue, March/April 2021

Karyn Cichocki: 2nd Place

Getting the Most Out of Leaves, September/October 2020

Scott Evans: 3rd Place

Up. Down. All Around: The Three Basic Plant Nutrients, January/February 2021

Thank you again to all entrants; we had some great articles this past year. And special thanks to Pat Hancock, Sue Hoffmann, the contest judges, and the generous hybridizers and exhibitors who donated the prizes.

Honoring Our 2021 Outstanding AVSA Members

By Linda Hall Email: linda.hall6641@hotmail.com

Thank you to all members who submitted nominees for the 2020 AVSA Society Awards. This year, we announced our winners at the AVSA Cyber Convention and here in *AVM*. Congratulations to our worthy recipients!

■ Distinguished Service Award



Recipient:

Winston J. Goretsky

AVSA would like to honor Winston Goretsky with a Distinguished Service Award for his dedication to AVSA for more than 40 years. Winston was a teenager when he joined AVSA in 1979 and he has

served AVSA in multiple capacities as an International Director, 3rd Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, 1st Vice-President and President. He has chaired numerous committees, is a Life Member, an Honorary Life Member, a Master Judge and a Teacher.

Winston is currently serving as an International Director and as Past President.

He is the only individual who has been both the president of AVSA and African Violet Society of Canada (AVSC) and he will soon be the president of the Gesneriad Society.

Winston has been the official *AVM* photographer since 1997 and has been photographing conventions since 1995. Winston also has produced the AVSA calendar since 2005.

He has been the recipient of an Honorary One-Year Membership (2005), Continuing Service Award (2008), Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership (2011) and an Honorary Life Membership (2017).

Winston's enthusiasm for African violets is contagious. He has traveled to China on several occasions to promote our beloved Society. He has sacrificed precious graduations and family functions to be present for AVSA. He works behind the scenes in many capacities, getting projects completed. Recently, he has taken on a project management role to implement the iMIS solution at the AVSA office. He has worked to integrate this solution with the Website Committee to launch a newly redesigned website for members and the interested public.

AVSA is pleased to honor Winston Goretsky with a Distinguished Service Award.

■ Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership



Recipient: Joan Santino

This year, the Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership is presented to a woman who has served her affiliate for more than 35 years. As president, vice-president and recording secretary, Joan Santino has led her club to great heights. She is always there to lend a helping hand and knows how to get the job done. She is instrumental in creating show themes. Every year she serves on one or two committees and is a senior judge. Joan puts that skill to work by always being there — sitting at the classification table doing her job identifying plants and helping with last-minute grooming before a plant enters the showroom.

Joan loves to mentor new members in growing African violets and gesneriads. She has presented many programs on designs, dish gardens, terrariums and how to grow "quality" show plants. She is the club's "go-to woman" and always promotes AVSA.

Joan is a member of the African Violet Society of Springfield, the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society, and in 2012 she received an Honorary One-Year Membership from AVSA for serving as Show Chair for the 2011 AVSA Convention in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

AVSA is pleased to present Joan Santino with the Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership.

■ Continuing Service Award



Recipient: Joyce Stork

AVSA is pleased to present a Continuing Service Award to Joyce Stork for her contributions in launching AVSA's WordPress website. She has been self-taught by studying YouTube videos and has become very

knowledgeable in WordPress.

Joyce has been a driving force in marketing AVSA and plans to launch a nationwide membership campaign in the near future.

She has been dedicated to both the 2020 Virtual Violets Convention and the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021, constantly recruiting members to serve in various capacities and providing innovative ideas. The Cyber Convention website was largely Joyce's idea.

Joyce continues to provide up-to-date information to both members and hobbyists on a weekly and monthly basis with *AVSA Growing Tips* and *AVSA News*.

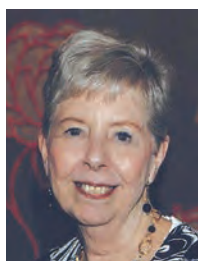
She has served AVSA as a Director, 3rd Vice-President, 2nd VicePresident, 1st Vice President, and President, and has chaired numerous committees. She currently chairs the Marketing Committee.

Joyce has also been the recipient of two Honorary One-Year Memberships (1989, 2001), an Honorary Life Membership (2009) and the Bronze Medal Award (1989). She is a Master Judge, Teacher, Life Member, Honorary Life Member and a member of the Legacy Society.

Joyce has donated countless hours of her time, making her Continuing Service Award a tribute to her dedication to AVSA.

Thank you to all
members who
submitted nominees
for the 2020 AVSA
Society Awards.

■ Honorary Life Membership



Recipient: Sue Ramser

This year AVSA is honored to present Sue Ramser with an Honorary Life Membership. Sue has served this society over the past two years with one of the most difficult presidencies there has ever been. AVSA has had no

in-person conventions or meetings. She conducted meetings via Zoom to move AVSA in a positive direction in this trying time of the pandemic.

It was with a heavy heart that she had to deliver the news that not one, but two conventions were canceled. But Sue smiled and pushed AVSA forward with two virtual conventions and a new website, and kept a tight rein on our budget with help from the Executive Committee.

Sue has been a member of AVSA for 49 years. She has served and chaired the Society on many committees, as a Director, Secretary, Treasurer, 3rd Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 1st Vice President and its President. She is an Honorary Life Member, Life Member, Master Judge, Teacher, and a member of the Legacy Society. In 1993 Sue compiled "Teaching Tools" for judges, which she and Dr. Barbara Pershing updated in 2013.

Locally, Sue is a member of the First African Violet Society of Wichita Falls, having served in all the club's offices. She is also a member of Lone Star African Violet Council and North Texas African Violet Judges Council, serving both councils in many capacities.

Sue is a graduate of the University of North Texas, Denton with a Bachelor of Business Administration. One of her other interests is genealogy, which led her to qualify for membership in The Daughters of the Republic of Texas and National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. And of course, her number-one other interest is her grandchildren. Just ask her!

AVSA honors Sue Ramser with an Honorary Life Membership for her dedication and tenacity in leading AVSA as its President.

■ **Honorary One-Year Memberships**



Recipient: Susan Anderson

AVSA would like to present Susan Anderson an Honorary One-Year Membership for her service as Convention/Show Co-Chair for the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention. Susan and her co-chair worked countless hours to make this convention a reality in the wake of the pandemic and our canceled in-person convention. Without her vision, the year 2020 would have passed by without a convention.

Susan has been a member of AVSA since 1997. In 2016, she co-founded Copper State African Violet Club. She has been a Director and served on several committees. Susan currently chairs Tally Time and the Salary Committee. She has been AVSA's 3rd Vice-President, 2nd Vice President and is currently the 1st Vice President.

AVSA thanks Susan Anderson for her dedication to AVSA and its future by awarding her an Honorary One-Year Membership.



Recipient: Roxanne Clapp

AVSA is pleased to present Roxanne Clapp an Honorary One-Year Membership. She has graciously donated her time and skills as a professional graphic designer to create the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Convention logos. Roxanne has helped with the Booster Fund, the new website, and marketing Bloomlala

and the drinkware. She was also instrumental in creating the Advertising Media Kit, which helped vendors with logos and ad copy. The 1950 logo project took her weeks to clean up and now has a new life.

Roxanne maintains all the AVSA brand mark files so we can customize images for specific applications. Not only has she accomplished all these tasks, but she has done them in a timely manner.

AVSA is thankful for Roxanne's skills and enthusiasm to move the society into the future.



Recipient: Mary Corondan

AVSA is pleased to award an Honorary One-Year Membership to Mary Corondan for being the Convention/Show Co-Chair of the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention. The virtual convention was precipitated by the pandemic, which canceled our in-person convention, but the show must go on. Mary worked tirelessly to persuade AVSA members to contribute to this effort. She always goes above and beyond any task she undertakes and does it with grace.

Mary is AVSA's 2nd Vice President, acting Secretary, chairs the Shows and Judges Committee, chairs the Policies and Procedures Committee and is currently the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Convention Show Chair.

Locally, Mary is a member of the Lone Star African Violet Council, First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas and North Texas African Violet Judges Council. She is also an AVSA Master Judge.

AVSA honors Mary Corondan with an Honorary One-Year Membership for her dedication to making the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention a reality.

**Recipient: Richard Craft**

AVSA would like to thank Richard Craft with an Honorary One-Year Membership for his many contributions to the society. He was instrumental in making the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention a reality by orchestrating the commercial salesroom, arranging five educational presentations and providing technical assistance for web development.

Richard has been very active in the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Convention. He organized the commercial salesroom, video tours of commercial facilities, commercials appearing in Zoom social activities, educational presentations and prerecorded Zoom meetings. He has also increased his technical support for the entire website.

Richard has been a Director since 2019 and is the Advertising Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Co-Chair, YouTube Channel Head and Library Committee Vice Chair.

Locally, Richard is a member of Glitter Gulch African Violet Growers.

AVSA is pleased to present an Honorary One-Year Membership to Richard Craft.

**Recipient: Teresa Odle**

AVSA would like to thank Teresa Odle for her three years of dedication in producing a quality *African Violet Magazine*. She took on this assignment and made it her own. She liked to theme issues with articles on similar

topics but also added many other quality articles to each magazine. Teresa also helped make the digital *AVM* a reality in 2020.

We are excited for Teresa as she leaves for a new position as a grandmother, but we will greatly miss her.

AVSA is grateful for the time Teresa has been part of our society and the excellent *AVM* she produced. For her years of service, AVSA presents to Teresa Odle an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1 through April 30, 2021 Total: \$190

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.**■ \$100-\$199**

Jan Houston, Champaign, IL

■ \$25-\$49

Margaret Nasta, McKeesport, MA

■ Under \$25

Delores Baker, Cheyenne, WY

Marilyn Heinrich, Northport, NY

Barbara Kirby, Saint John, IN

Suzanne Myers, Clarkesville, GA

Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN

Lynne Shandley, Seattle, WA



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Buffalo Hunt

Exhibited by: Ben Haning
Hybridized by: K. Stork
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rebel's Sugar Pie

Exhibited by: Susan Kautz
Hybridized by: R. Bann
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus
'Dale's Lost in Space'

Exhibited by: Elmer Godeny
Hybridized by: D. Martens



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus
'Texas Hot Chili'

Exhibited by: Marie Burns
Hybridized by: D. Martens

In Memory

Sharon Gartner

Sharon Yvette Gartner passed away on April 22, 2021, surrounded by her loving family.

As a young girl, Sharon's grandfather passed on to her his love of plants, and African violets in particular. Her interest was piqued! She was infatuated to the point that she took some of these violets along to college. But she always wanted to raise them on a grander scale. One day, she discovered an African violet club that was just forming (the Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society), and she decided to follow her dream.

Sharon quickly became a key member of this club, until she was at its very heart and soul. She became a world-class grower, earning high awards at regional and national shows. She worked hard behind the scenes as well, and was the Treasurer for the African Violet Council of Florida, as well as one of the Directors and the Convention Show Awards Chair for AVSA.

To her African violet family, Sharon was a great leader, supreme organizer, and beloved friend. We are grieving the loss of someone who can never be replaced. Her dynamic presence and unfailing enthusiasm for the violet community will long be remembered and her many contributions will continue. Her legacy is carried on by those who knew and loved her.

In all of our hearts we know that Sharon is not really gone ... she has simply been ... repotted. She will bloom now in God's garden where we are sure she will be considered "Best in Show."

Mary McFarland

The African Violet world has lost a valuable member in Mary McFarland. She was a friend, mentor, master judge, and an inspiration to all.

Mary was co-founder of Sundowners African Violet Club in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. When she retired, she moved to Woodlands, Texas. Here, she joined Spring Branch African Violet Club of Houston and Lone Star African Violet Society. She continued to do workshops and show plants. Health issues began to take a toll on her, but Mary attended the AVSA show held in Houston in 2019. She entered several plants and won awards for each one. This would be Mary's last show.

Mary's knowledge and love for violets and streps will live on through the many friends she made with this hobby.

Gerald "Chad" Tutor

Gerald Chadwick "Chad" Tutor, age 49, of Memphis, Tennessee, passed away March 15, 2021. He was a much-loved member of the Memphis African Violet Society (MAVS), as well as a member of AVSA and the Gesneriad Society. He leaves behind Ruth Tutor, his wife of 21 years, who also is a member of MAVS. Chad was a newer member of our club who was always eager to learn and willing to help. You never saw him without a smile, and he brought much joy to our club.

Chad sang in his church choir and played in his church's orchestra and hand bell choir. He was a graduate of Ole Miss and worked in tax accounting. He was an avid fan of Ole Miss.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Choctaw

Exhibited by: Anne Nicholas
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Opal

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Miniature



And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

Email: winners@avsa.org

■ Albuquerque AVC, NM — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: K's Berry Bianco, K's Freedom, K's Sangria Splash; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Winnergreen; Best Standard:

K's Simply Put; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Kathy Hajner.

•Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Trailer: Lil Runaround; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Gwen',

Renee Bernard.

•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes,

Shirley Tetreault.

■ Copper State AVC, AZ — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Granger's Wonderland, Granger Gardens' Ebb Tide; Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5i clone *velutinus*

lite, S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, S. 5f clone *orbicularis*;

Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Lilli Pilli; Best Standard: Granger's Wonderland; Best Miniature:

Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Species: S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Candace Baldwin.

•Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy,

Beverly Wombold.

•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpella* 'Sparkle',

Denise Lee.

•Best Design, **Susan Anderson.**

•Design Sweepstakes, **Bill Patterson.**

Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Club Starving for Activities? A Possible Cure

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

I belong to several clubs in the East and two in the province of Ontario, Canada. Several of these clubs have had Zoom meetings throughout the pandemic, but my local club, the African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Western New York, had not met since February 2020. The place we meet was closed down and banned anyone from coming into the building, so we didn't have much choice. We do have a wonderful newsletter from member Holly Pohl, which has kept us in touch over this period of "starvation."

Parking Lot Exchange

Through emails with friends, I learned about their plant exchange meetings outdoors, in a parking lot. This sounded like a possibility for our club. I proposed it to our president, other officers and board of directors. We set a date and another as a possible rain date. We chose Saturday afternoons, since that seemed to be a time when even those who are working might be able to attend.

The day came, and it was beautiful! Not a cloud in the sky and temperatures in the mid to high 60s. One by one, members' cars pulled in. Those of us who are fully vaccinated went without masks, since we were outdoors, and the CDC allowed that. Some members kept their masks on, which was fine.

A total of seven members attended. One lady took plants for two other members who were out of town that day. We all were so happy to see each other. Almost all attendees brought plants to exchange, and we had a good time doing so.

Project Plants

I had torn apart several large plants; I gave out the cuttings and starter plants as project plants for 2022, hoping that we can have our regularly scheduled show by that time. As an aside, I must tell you that

we decided years ago to ask members to bring their project plants to enter in the club project class(es).

My local club ... had
not met since
February 2020.

We ask our judges to choose the best one in each class, but not actually judge every plant. It works! We get many more plants entered in these classes this way. It shows the way the same plant grows for different people in their conditions and creates a lot of interest. Your club might wish to try this approach.

Successful Exchange

Everyone went home from our plant exchange with some new starters, crowns or leaf cuttings to be put down and grown on. What a boost to our starving morale and an inspiration for each of us to grow something new or different. It also helped each member to make some much-needed room on their plant shelves and windowsills.

My only regret is that I got so involved with visiting and looking over plants that I completely forgot to take pictures to accompany this article! My bad. You can easily imagine the vehicles parked in a row, all well spaced, and members mingling around the trunks or tables some folks brought. It was such fun and a greatly needed activity.

If it Ain't Broke — Don't Fix it!

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

Email: kdc05@ptd.net

Whenever I give a program on growing plants, I always mention that if you are going to try something new, you should do so only on a couple of plants and wait about two to three months to see how it works in your conditions. Well, sometimes I don't listen to my own suggestions.

I wick all my violets using a plastic grid that sits on pieces of PVC pipe in a tray; a mat sits on the grid with ends hanging down into the tray, which is filled with water, as shown in photo 1. I've been using this method for several years and it works quite well. However, there are a few drawbacks:

- If the acrylic felt mat dries out because I fail to fill the tray with water in time, it is a pain to rewet.
- I really need to repot the plants about every 4 to 5 months; otherwise the roots will grow down the wick and into the mat and even down into the water in the tray. The roots are not easy to remove from the mat.



Photo 1. Tray with mat for capillary watering.

A Change to Watering

When I repotted all my violets in January, I had waited a bit too long. Many of the pots had roots that had grown into the mat, and in several cases through the mat, and there was a mass of roots in the water. So, I decided to do away with the mat and just put long wicks in all the pots, hanging the

wicks down through the grid into the tray filled with water.

I knew that my plants were all free of soil mealybugs so I did not worry about them getting spread around from one pot to another via the wicks. The second photo shows the tray and grid without the mat.

There was a mass of roots in the water.

Problems with the New Method

Well, since then, I've had a devil of a time with the wicks not working and pots drying out, which I don't understand, since I started the wicking action as I usually do. Also, without the mat, the water was evaporating more quickly and algae were growing in the trays. This doesn't happen with the mats because the dark material blocks light to the water.



Photo 2. Tray setup without the mat.

I also noticed some nasty looking gooey stuff growing on the wicks. So, 2 months later, I've put the mats back on all the trays, which involved removing the trays from the stand, all the plants

off the trays, putting the moistened mats on the trays, replacing the plants, and then putting the trays back.

Back to Fixed

I purchased some of the VT Vattex capillary matting mentioned by Mel Grice during a January program. Hydroponic growers use this matting. It is thinner, wets quite easily, but it is light gray so I don't know whether it will hinder the algae growth as the black mat does.

I'll just have to
remember to repot
more often.

Time will tell, and I'll just have to remember to repot more often to prevent a repeat of the roots growing into the new mats.

Coming Events

Summer African violet shows and sales still might be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This list represents those shows scheduled on our website as of May 26, 2021. Be sure to check the AVSA website Events page (www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook, or contact the organizers below for the latest information.

■ **September 10-12 — Maryland**

National Capital Area Chapter of the
Gesneriad Society
Show and sale
Homestead Gardens
743 W. Central Avenue
Davidsonville, MD
Friday: Sale, 1-6 p.m.
Saturday: Show, 1-6 p.m.; sale, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sunday: Show, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Bill Schmidt: 804-266-6157
Danraybill@gmail.com
www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

■ **September 18 — Texas**

NASA Area African Violet Society
Fall Plant Show and Display
Bay Harbour United Methodist Church
3459 FM Rd. 518 East, League City, TX
10 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Dianne Duggan 239-247-3817
ddgcampbell@earthlink.net

■ **October 22-23 — Arkansas**

Central Arkansas African Violet Society
Show and sale
North Little Rock Community Center
2700 Willow St
North Little Rock, AR
Friday: noon- 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
AliceBrownjerryalice@att.net

Missing Millennial

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

In the past decade, plant societies across the country have seen local clubs shutting their doors, membership dwindling, and lack of participation from two key demographics: those of the millennial generation (born between 1981 and 1996) and persons of color. To address this growing concern that is affecting plant organizations across the country, I sought input from millennial peers and people of color to see what concerns they have and reasons why they have not joined a plant society.

Surveying Millennials

In an online plant group with 3,000-plus plant enthusiasts, most identifying as both millennial and a person of color, only 12 passionate respondents replied to my request with reasons why they have not joined an official plant club/society. The following are listed in order of most frequent responses:

- Lack of racial/ethnic diversity.** Three-quarters of respondents reported that lack of racial diversity was a reason why they chose not to participate in formal plant clubs. Several stated they felt out of place or awkward when they first sat in on a meeting, and never went back.

- Age disparity.** Two-thirds stated that the age difference between current members and prospective members is too wide, creating a false impression that the organization is not welcoming, or that it is exclusive to a more mature membership.

- Lack of advertising.** Half of respondents were surprised that formal plant clubs/societies existed, claiming lack of advertising in age-relevant media sources.

- Lack of local presence.** A third of repliers pointed out that there is a lack of local plant clubs in their hometown.

- Presence of online plant communities.** One quarter of respondents replied that online plant com-

munities (such as Facebook plant groups) were sufficient for their plant needs, from purchasing plants, to getting help, education, and forming online communities/friendships.

- Inconvenient timing of local meetings.** A few individuals pointed out that the local club's meeting times were inconvenient for their work schedule, favoring those who are underemployed or retired.

Several stated they
felt out of place or
awkward ...

Attracting New Members

Some reasons respondents stated for not joining plant clubs/societies are a challenge to address, while some can be easily ameliorated with limited resources and costs. The most easily addressable point for local clubs is the inconvenient times that some plant clubs meet.

If the club wants to attract a younger generation of members, having meetings on a weekday cannot be an option. I recently was asked to give a seminar on African violets to a garden club that meets on Thursdays at 10 a.m., which meant I had to take half a day off work.

Several respondents stated they were not aware that plant clubs or societies existed, and several who knew of them were unaware of the benefits that come with being a member. After visiting plant societies' websites, respondents found them a challenge to navigate, riddled with outdated information and resources, and aesthetically uninviting. A web

engineer respondent referred to these as “Legacy” websites, formed approximately two decades ago, and having undergone no significant updates or improvements to effectively attract, advertise, and communicate to a generation with information at their fingertips. (AVSA had a “Legacy” website, but it was updated and revamped this past year).

The Internet has changed how quickly information is disseminated to an entire organization and the processing of electronic payments to cover membership dues and purchases. As we have seen in the past several months, it also has affected how members can remain in touch and still learn and interact through virtual meetings.

Role of Online Participation

Specialized groups (such as Facebook plant groups) have formed online to give plant enthusiasts a group in which to “talk” about their interests and even get help with plants. A few national plant societies have created Facebook groups that establish the organization’s expertise and encourage information exchange among their participants. At times, organizations’ groups have fewer participants than do informal groups.

Some might argue the Internet is the downfall of organized societies. The responses of the 0.4 percent of an online plant group with 3,000-plus members suggest that many might not feel the need to join an organized plant club. Further, for many, an online plant group they can log into whenever they have questions — even though the answers might not be correct — will suffice.

Still, we should target even that small percentage who are passionate and curious about plant societies. They might translate to 0.4 percent of the population of a thriving city or town filled with citizens of all ages who grow plants by their windowsill.

Creating Diverse and Thriving Plant Societies

The prevailing concern remains, which is getting Millennials (and those younger) and persons of color into the organizations. I had a discussion with a participant who identifies as a person of color and as generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) age.

This person currently serves as president of a local plant organization and stated that a recent rise in membership representing people who are younger and of color in her club could be attributed to her presence and leadership.

You are indispensable
in the next crucial
phase of recruiting
members.

Is it possible that when others see those who look like them in positions of authority and expertise, it motivates participation from those of a similar demographic? For organizations that currently have members who are millennials or persons of color, it is advised that the groups’ leaders mentor, encourage, and groom these members for leadership or support roles that might attract future members similar to their demographic.

To the valuable and experienced mentors who continue to encourage and teach, and who will leave a lasting impact for years to come upon AVSA members like me, I encourage you to continue these efforts. You are indispensable in the next crucial phase of recruiting members who are just as passionate about the hobby as you are, and who can carry on your knowledge and legacy.

The bridge between the generations must be built, but for it to be successful and sustainable, the effort will likely require the Internet and social media in some context. I suggest a visual campaign, particularly at the national level, that depicts the diversity in age, gender, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation to drive the message that plant societies are inclusive and fun.

Let this be our priority to reestablish not only membership, but also comradery, friendship, and education, all benefits of being a part of something great.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Jolly Butterfly

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Donna's Twilight Snowfall

Exhibited by: Donna Brining
Hybridized by: D. Brining
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sinningia
'Venetian Moon'

Exhibited by: Susan Arnao
Hybridized by: Al Wojcik



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Episcia
'My Precious'

Exhibited by: Jane Rexilius
Hybridized by: G. Barnes

Impact of Spectrally Balanced with Far-Red LEDs on African Violets

By Tim Pinkelman, Jennifer Vincent, Sam Cunningham, and Dr. Minh Bui

For decades, members of the African violet community have successfully grown their plants with artificial lights, most notably T12 and T8 fluorescent lights. Spectral analyses reveal these fluorescent lights often emit green at nearly 100 percent, but less in the blue and red regions, and these regions are essential for photosynthetic efficiency.

During the past decade, LEDs entered the picture, but their inconsistent quality left many frustrated, and others hesitant to make the switch. Here, four growers from three different parts of the United States experiment with a new generation of LEDs that max out at the blue and red peaks (instead of green) with an added far-red portion of the spectrum — which has not been used on African violets before.

The Full Spectrum Plus 18-watt LED lights were generously donated by orchid expert Jeff Young from The Orchid Hobbyist (theorchidhobbyist.com). In return, we provided our honest evaluation growing different types of violets in various culture conditions. Below are the assessments from the four growers.

■ Tim Pinkelman

I started growing African violets during the wee years of my childhood. I remember starting scads of violets growing up. One of the most enjoyable parts was being able to give one away when company came to visit. During high school and college, violets took the back burner. A few years back, I decided it was time to jump back into the hobby, this time mainly with semiminiature plants. While I love all violets, semis are both easy to grow and to hoard.

Methods

I grow using a large wire rack that accommodates two trays per shelf. Plants sit on eggcrate wicking trays for constant water/fertilizer uptake. Plants were freshly repotted in a wicking-optimized mix of 60

percent perlite and 30 percent peat mix. Since it was winter, I covered the shelf to raise temperatures inside the unit.

Duplicates of plants grew on both the control shelf and the far-red spectrum shelf.

I placed duplicate plants in corresponding locations on each shelf for consistency and ease of reference. The control group in this case was the duplicates placed on the 4000K shelf. Plants are 8 inches below the lights and have a photo period of 8 hours per day.

Constants

- The plants all measured the same distance (8 inches) from the crowns to the fixtures.
- The plants received the same water, with the same fertilizer type and amounts.
- The plants were exposed to the same photo period, until the last two weeks.
- The plants were freshly repotted at the beginning of the experiment and were torn down to make them similar in size.
- Duplicates of plants in similar growth phases at the start of the experiment grew on both the control shelf and the far-red spectrum shelf for comparison.

Variables

- The lights were Full Spectrum Plus LEDs with far-red spectrum vs generic 4000K LEDs (Kihung T5 LED tube light fixture).

•There were potential variances in temperatures, depending on shelf or time of day. Shelves were located one on top of each other to minimize differences.

Question

- Will Full Spectrum Plus LED lights help flatten the plants with an upright growth habit?
- Will the full spectrum lights help plants with tight crowns to loosen?
- Will the new lights cause plants with “wagon wheel” tendencies to have a more desirable growth habit?
- What effect on bloom will the Full Spectrum Plus lights have?

Conjecture

There are many variables in the African violet hybridizing realm. Hybridizers select plants based on what grows the best in their own setups. This is why some growers have little luck with certain African violets, while others have good luck. For instance, hybridizer A might be using LED light, while hybridizer B uses fluorescent light; yet another hybridizer might be growing in greenhouses.

As any good hybridizer should, they select the strongest seedlings that are growing for them, inadvertently selecting the plant that does best under their particular lighting conditions. This can be the cause of incompatibilities with certain plants and growers.

I did not expect the Full Spectrum Plus lights to be a one-size-fits-all approach. I thought they would do well with certain violets that grow poorly under other artificial lighting applications, possibly granting a second chance for the “troubled tenants” on our shelves. That being said, just like some plants ail under certain lights, I expected the same to be true about these lights.

Initial Tests and Observations

Light meter tests showed that the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights were outputting one-third more light at 3300 lux than the control lights at 2040 lux (measured with a Leaton L830 light meter).

Despite this, I kept the photo period the same for a better comparison. The light output on the far-red spectrum bulbs is noticeably cooler in kelvin and

makes the plants and blooms appear much more vivid.

Test Plants

I selected a wide range of plants, some exhibiting troubling growth patterns, and other select African violets and other gesneriads for the Full Spectrum Plus lights. I have listed those of consequence, along with their ailments:

1. Rob’s Cool Fruit – spaced-out growth
2. Scales – upright growth
3. Toy Castle – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
4. Queen Sabrina – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
5. Star Wars – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
6. Rob’s Scrumptious – tight center growth
7. Tipped Honey – upright growth
8. Psychedelic Show – upright growth
9. Sassy Angel – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
10. NK-Dusha Moja – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
11. Jolly Fireball – spaced-out growth
12. *Streptocarpus* ‘Dale’s Polar Blizzard’ – extreme upright growth

Not all plants contained on the Full Spectrum Plus LED shelf are listed, as they did not have ailments initially. I wanted to maximize usage of shelf space and see if plants growing well under the control do well under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights.

Note: One primulina plant and two petrocosmeas were grown successfully with no ill effect under the lights.

Findings

While results were clear, they were not always consistent. Some plants exhibited a positive response, while others exhibited neutral or negative response to the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. Commonalities included what I call a “superbloom.” I had not been preparing these plants for show, but many of them under the full-spectrum bulbs put on an extreme show blooming, which led to concern that they might bloom themselves to death.



NK-Dusha Moja grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs (left) and control lights (right). Tipped Honey's upright growth resolved under the test LEDs. Toy Castle grown under control lights (left) and full spectrum (right). Rob's Scrumptious still had tight centers, but lots of blooms after moving to Full Spectrum Plus lights.

While this can be bad, it is easily rectified by selectively plucking bloom stalks. My Jolly Fireball, for instance, exhibited the most intense bloom I have ever witnessed on it to date.

A secondary observation is the leaf coloration. Overall, plants under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights developed darker green pigmentation (unless they were crown variegated. Many plants grew faster under these LED lights). However, a couple of outliers did not. Sassy Angel and Scales grew larger under the control LED lights; Star Wars showed no perceivable difference in plant size. Many plants grew larger and darker green than the control plants. I learned after further research that this is to be expected because far-red spectrum promotes chlorophyll production.

Crown variegation exhibited a possible concern in African violet growth under these full spectrum plus lights. NK-Dusha Moja (pictured) and Scales were the only two plants with crown variegation that were duplicated. NK-Dusha Moja was tastefully variegated under the test lights, while the control plant showed next to no variegation.

Anecdotal evidence might suggest that suckers are more common under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. I found I had to be extra judicious.

Rob's Scrumptious was getting tight centers on the control shelf, so I moved it to the full-spectrum lights. It showed no improvement but sent out many blooms. Tight centers suggest too long under lights, which led me to reduce the time under the Full Spectrum Plus lights from 8 hours to 7 hours instead later in the experiment.

Upright growth exhibited in Tipped Honey (pictured) and Psychedelic Show resolved under the full-spectrum lights, despite many blooms pushing through the foliage. Spaced-out growth in Rob's Cool Fruit was not resolved, however, it did resolve on Ness' Crinkle Blue. I have incon-

clusive findings on Jolly Fireball, because the titanic flower head is covering most of the foliage. From what I can see, it is looking as good as can be expected. Upright growth on Streptocarpus 'Dale's Polar Blizzard' corrected itself under full spectrum lights as well.

Conclusion

Overall, my initial conjecture was correct in that select plants would do no better or worse under Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. However, problem African violets did do better under the far-red spectrum lights, with a few outliers. I underestimated the effect it would have on bloom production and chlorophyll synthesis. These lights tend to make plants grow and bloom faster overall, with more blooms than from traditional lighting.

In an ideal world, I think a grower could benefit from having half the lights on their shelf be basic LEDs, and the other half be full spectrum plus LED lights. You get the best of both worlds that way. If a certain plant does not respond well under one, put it under the other (with show plants getting priority under full spectrum plus LEDs).

Furthermore, this approach will stretch the grower's dollar because the biggest drawback to the Full Spectrum Plus lights is the price. I outfitted my entire shelf with the control bulbs for the price of a single Full Spectrum Plus bulb. For show growers and serious hobbyists, the expenditure is worth considering, especially if it means prize-winning plants to bring to shows. I plan to use these in my show-growing ventures to come, and continue experimenting with them.

Jennifer Vincent

When I was a child, my great aunt Arlene introduced me to African violets. She would let me take leaves from her plants, and I planted them in the same pot as a big jade plant at my grandma's house. I enjoy hybridizing and will hopefully someday soon have my own registered hybrids.



Optimara Little Trio on November 2, 2020. Top: control plant; bottom: grown under Full Spectrum Plus lights.

On September 17, 2020, I placed two Full Spectrum Plus LED lights on one shelf of my 4-foot wire stand, 8 to 9 inches above the tops of the pots, for eight hours. My control (comparison) shelves are on the same stand, with two Kihung T5 4000K LED 4-foot

tube light fixtures (20W, 2200lm), on for 9 hours. My thermostat is set between 66 and 68 degrees with humidity around 34 percent. All plants in the experiment are wick watered using the same fertilizer.



Plants growing under full-spectrum lights on November 11, 2020. Photo by Jennifer Vincent.



Rivermist Sizzle (top: control; bottom: full spectrum) on January 16, 2021.

On November 11, 2020, I turned the lights down from eight to seven hours. Plants were blooming a lot and some leaves appeared to be burning on the edges.

January 26, 2021: Providing 7 hours of light worked well for most of my test plants. Most of the plants on the shelf with Full Spectrum Plus LED lights have more flowers and more vibrantly colored flowers.

January 28, 2021: Some plants under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs had smaller diameters. Powwow was showing possible signs of too much red light with long flower stems that did not stand upright.



Optimara Affection (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).

Conclusion

Full Spectrum Plus LED lights produced more blooms faster with more vibrant colors for most African violet hybrids I grew. Plants under these lights required fewer hours of light than did control plants. The foliage grew flatter and smaller in most hybrids.

Some plants responded the same in both environments. I did not lose any of my plants due to excessive blooming for extended times. All comparison side-by-side photos are of hybrid plants of the same age. I would recommend using something to shield your eyes from looking directly at the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights if they are at eye level. These lights could be a great addition to any collection; each hybrid reacts differently to different lights.

■ Sam Cunningham

I am retired, a hobby grower of African violets, and a member of the AVSA and The Gesneriad Society. I enjoy research and development, which flows right into my hobby. Unafraid of making big change, and thinking outside my box, I started the Houston African Violet and Gesneriad Society a little over a year ago with the help of some great club friends.

I like growing hard-to-find African violets and other gesneriads, and have recently started hybridizing African violets. I'm always ready for a good experiment.

Purpose

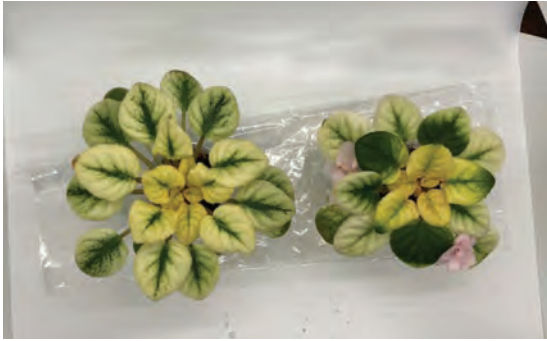
The purpose of this study was to compare Full Spectrum Plus LED tubes with my standard growing methods using LED shop lights to weigh the benefits of the far-red spectrum — which has proven positive with orchid growing — for growing African violets.



Buckeye Seductress (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).



Optimara Little Moonstone (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).



Key Lime Treat (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).

The study began late in October 2020 and lasted 3 to 4 months.

Methods

I grew eight young plants getting ready to bloom, using identical conditions other than the lighting. I have explained below — with comparison photos to follow — my opinion of the pros and cons of each light source.

Originally, I intended to use three different plants in three different growing mediums on three different stands with different lighting combinations. I had also incorporated noticeably young hybrid seedlings from my own crosses, but quickly learned the high-red spectrum LEDs were doing nothing but burning my new plants. I switched those with duplicate plants that were just starting to bloom, and paired down to just two light sources, Group A and Group B, for a more simplified study on growth of these plants.

Plant samples

- Mac's Misty Meadow
- Senk's Blue Cascade
- Senk's Fruit Fly
- Honey Puff
- Mac's Elegant Emerald
- Jolly Orchid
- SK-Novaya Zhizn
- LE-Mindal'noe Pirojnoye

Subject Group A

- Light Source: Two 4-foot Full Spectrum Plus LED tubes
- Foot Candles: 543 x 10 (5,530) using the Dr. Meter LX1330B digital light meter.
- 9 hours of light on automatic Nexia thermostat controller.
- Distance from top of plants to Lights: 10 inches.
- Temperature/humidity: Nexia Wi-Fi thermostat controller. Monitored with AcuRite 00325 indoor thermometer/hygrometer 68 degrees, humidity 48 percent at night and 72 degrees, with humidity at 60 percent in daytime.
- Watering method: RO filtered, and wicked with synthetic yarn on 2020 trays and light diffuser panels.
- Fertilizer: Grow More 20-10-20 urea-free orchid food 1/4 tsp per gallon.

Subject Group B (Control)

- Light Source: Sunco 4-foot dual tube 40W 5000K, 4500 Lumen Shop Light 2 units per shelf
- Foot Candles 135 10, or (1350) using the Dr. Meter LX1330B digital light meter.
- Hours of light: 9 on automatic Nexia thermostat controller
- Distance from top of plants to lights: 10 inches
- Temperature/humidity: Nexia Wi-Fi thermostat controller. Monitored with AcuRite 00325 indoor thermometer/hygrometer 68 degrees, humidity 48 percent at night and 72 degrees, 60 percent humidity in daytime.
- Watering method: RO filtered and wicked with synthetic yarn on 2020 trays and light diffuser panels.
- Fertilizer: Grow More 20-10-20 urea-free Orchid Food 1/4 tsp per gallon.

Comparisons

Specimens from both groups flourished during the period from November 3, 2020, to January 20, 2021. It appears the plants in group A (Full Spectrum Plus) grew smaller, produced less foliage than those in the control group, and had noticeably sparser blooms with longer peduncles.



SK-Novaya Zhizn (top) and Honey Puff (bottom), each grown under Full spectrum LED lights (left) and LED shop lights (right).



LE-Mindal'noe Pirojnoye (top) and Senk's Fruit Fly (bottom), each grown under Full spectrum LED lights (left) and LED shop lights (right).

Group A did not do well with foliage production and in some cases tended to cause burn on the leaves. Group B appears to have grown more compact, with shorter peduncles and more abundant blooms.

Conclusion

I feel that although the study was done in a short amount of time, the comparisons are notable. I would like to recommend a different study with a more structured set of protocols for the research. I would consider using the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights for a long-term project to look at benefits of fast-forwarding bloom growth on well-established plants rather than young plants, perhaps even in looking at a possible difference in bloom color and size.

In the end, I think I will be keeping my standard shop lights plugged in.

■ Minh Bui

I received a PhD in plant genetics in 2009 but left the plant world to pursue DNA and cancer research at the National Institutes of Health. Plants remain a passion since I was a child, but I only started actively growing African violets in 2017 and participated in my first show at the Buffalo convention in 2018. Today, I am

an active member of 15 plant clubs, president of one, and chair/director in various committees.

Methods

I sought to use the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs, which contain a maxed-out blue and red portion of the spectrum, with the added bonus of far-red light. Scientific literature reports that red and far red have a positive influence on flower and chlorophyll production but also can lead to the shade effect, causing etiolation (pale or bleached leaves from excluded sunlight) or hyperextended stems and petioles. Find a spectral comparison of the different lights including natural, fluorescent, LEDs and the Full Spectrum Plus can be found at my blog: <https://millenniaplantdr.com/nextgen-lighting-spike-producer/>.

- Test group: Full Spectrum Plus LEDs - two bulbs; day length: 8.5 hours; distance to canopies: 9 to 12 inches.

- Control group: 4-foot T5HO LEDs: one 3000K, one 6400K, and one UV-A/blacklight (Barrina UV LED Blacklight Bar, 22w, 4 ft, T5); daylength: 6.5 hours; distance to canopies: 7 to 10 inches.

Introduction

There are a few hybrids I have never grown successfully due to my biased preference toward high-blue 6400K daylight bulbs. I tend to prefer higher blue ratios to promote growth, shorter petioles and internodal distances, but not all African violets enjoy that setup. I hypothesized that a few Buckeyes (a series I have not had success with) prefer a warmer



Buckeye Nostalgia grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.

(more red) or spectrally balanced (equivalent red and blue) light source, and could benefit from an added far-red bonus. After many failed attempts at growing Buckeyes, the one I grew under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs has been my most successful so far.

With more than 15,000 African violet hybrids, one would expect that this diversified gene pool likely includes plants that are hypersensitive to the far-red spectrum. I hypothesized that high-blue light lovers will do poorly under the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs, resulting in hyperextended petioles and poor growth compared to one that I grow with higher blue.



EK-Golubio grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs (left) and control lights (right).

In the photo, the African violet on the left is grown with one each of 3000K, 6400K, and UV-A bulbs (details in my article, *UV: Feared and Forgotten*, *AVM*, March/April 2021).

The plant on the right in the photo is a propagated plant from the mother on the left, and is grown using the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs. As shown, the

foliage on the left plant remains compact and symmetrical, while the one on the right has foliage that is constantly reaching with long petioles. However, the one on the right is constantly blooming, which can often lead to delayed growth.

Having a diverse plant collection requires a diverse lighting system.

The added benefit of having far-red in one's growing regimen is not to be disregarded. The plants bloom quite often and even prematurely on young plants, which can have a negative impact on foliage growth.

For the hobby grower, a fully established plant supplemented with Full Spectrum Plus LEDs can yield a stand of blooms for many of the African violets in the collection.

For the show grower, I find one will have to disbud more frequently, and if growing a high-blue lover (like the one in the second photo), this lighting system might not work for that plant. I will continue to showcase African violets grown to their peak on social media, and will be sure to note that they were grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.

Having a diverse plant collection requires a diverse lighting system. One light does not fit all.

Tips and Techniques: Design Bubbles

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

I recently put together an underwater arrangement for a local African violet council virtual show and I just used our tap well water. I took the first picture (left, below) right after I filled the container and the second picture the next morning.

Other than one of the grapevine pieces coming loose, the other difference is how many bubbles formed, which doesn't happen with distilled water. I also think the bubbles might mean that the minerals and/or

chemicals in the water might be reacting to the materials used in the arrangement.

If I had placed this in a show, I would have taken something clean and gently passed it along the inside front glass to eliminate the bubbles there. Note: judges are not supposed to deduct points for air bubbles in underwater arrangements, but they will see your design more clearly without them.



Photo 1. The underwater arrangement immediately after filling with tap water.



Photo 2. The same arrangement the next morning, filled with bubbles from the tap water.



Registration Report

By Joe Brun

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ Stephen Covolo — Springville, CA

Steffano's Early Frost

- (11321) 03/13/2021 •S. Covolo
- Single-semidouble white pansy/random green edge.
- Medium green, plain, quilted, serrated.
- Standard.

■ Wesley Carter — Portland, OR

Wesley's Forest Dancer

- (11322) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Semidouble white and green bell.
- Variegated medium green and white, pointed, serrated. •Miniature.

Wesley's Leprechaun Parade

- (11323) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Single white sticktite wasp/green edge.
- Variegated light green and white, pointed.
- Miniature.

Wesley's Little Abomination

- (11324) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Double green and white wasp.
- Medium-dark green, pointed. •Miniature.

Wesley's Whimsical Whirlwind

- (11325) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Semidouble light pink wasp.
- Medium-dark green, pointed, glossy.
- Miniature.

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$360

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ \$100-\$199

Janet Riemer

*In memory of Bill Foster, Mary Boland,
Edward Bradford and Bill Paaue*

■ \$50-\$99

Columbus African Violet Society

In memory of Joanne Haner and John Castleman II
First African Violet Society of Dallas
In memory of Mary Boland
Noel Montgomery

■ \$25-\$49

Ron Davidson

In memory of Mary Boland
Suzanne Myers

■ Under \$25

Margaret Califano
Barbara Kirby
Marion Martin
Carol Semrau

African Violet Terms

Adapted from Dorothy Kosowsky, 2004

■ Society Terminology:

African Violet Magazine: Member publication of the African Violet Society of America, published six times a year. Also referred to as AVM.

AVML, African Violet Master Variety List: A series of volumes listing all registered and many non-registered varieties of African violets.

AVSA: African Violet Society of America, incorporated in 1947, with amateur and commercial grower members from around the world.

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges: This handbook contains the rules and regulations for African violet shows, judges, judging, plus other valuable information for exhibitors and growers.

Master List: See AVML.

■ Plants and Plant Care

Acidic (acid) soil: Soil that has a pH of less than 7.0.

Alkaline soil: Soil that has a pH greater than 7.0.

Anther: One or more sacks that contains the pollen.

Artificial Light: Light other than that provided by the sun.

Axil: The angle formed at the juncture of the petiole and the main stem.

Bell: Single blossoms with a bell shape.

Bloom stalk: Peduncle, pedicel, petal, etc.

Calyx: The cup-like base of a blossom. This external part is usually green in contrast to the inner showy portion composed of colored petals.

Capillary action: The movement of water upward, either by a wick or matting in contact with the plant container.

Chlorophyll: The green pigment found in the chloroplasts, necessary in the absorption of light for use in photosynthesis.

Chromosome: Microscopic, rod-like structure composed of individual units (genes) that pass on the plant's characteristics.

Condition: The cultural appearance of a plant, including an exhibit at the time of judging.

Crown: The head of the plant above the soil line. African violets are described as having single or multiple crowns.

Cultivar: The term most commonly refers to an assemblage of plants selected for desirable characteristics that are maintained during propagation. Through common usage, the word "cultivar" and "variety" often are seen as interchangeable.

Disbudding: Removal of the flower buds or bud stems to delay blooming for a later time.

Division: The cutting or gently pulling apart of a plant having two or more crowns.

Double-potting: The placement of a plant, still in its smaller pot, within a larger pot with the space between the two pots filled with soil mix.

Drench: To wet to the point of saturation.

Fertilizer: An enriching material used in soil (or soil-less mix) to increase soil productivity. Major elements of fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Secondary elements include sulfur, calcium, and magnesium.

Flared-top pot: A pot designed with an extended lip that serves as an additional support to the foliage.

Floriferousness: The quantity of bloom on a plant.

Foliage: The collective leaves of a plant.

Humidity: The ratio of water vapor held in the air, beneficial to plant growth.

Hybrid: A plant grown from seed as a result of breeding or cross-pollinating.

Hybridization: Using the pollen from one African violet and transferring it to the stigma of another violet to produce a progeny, or offspring, with qualities from both parent plants.

Hybridizer: One who breeds or cross-pollinates plants.

Leach: To pour a quantity of plain water through the soil of a plant to flush away accumulated fertilizer salts and neutralize alkaline buildup.

Leaf cutting: A leaf, plus a portion of the petiole, cut from a plant and used for propagating purposes.

Mutant: see Sport.

Neck: A plant that has lost leaves from the lower portion of the plant, exposing the main stalk above the potting mixture.

Ovary: The flower's reproductive part, in which the seed develops; at the base of the pistil.

Pasteurize: To raise the temperature of the soil or potting mix (or one of the components thereof) to 180 degrees F and maintain that temperature for 30 minutes for the purpose of removing harmful pathogens.

Pathogen: Any agent that causes disease; a virus or a microorganism such as a bacterium or fungus.

Peduncle: The stem, or stalk, that supports a flower cluster. Located near the crown of the plant, the peduncles develop between the leaves.

Pedicel: The stem that supports the individual buds or blossoms in a bloom cluster. Pedicels grow from a peduncle.

Petal: One of each individual segments of a bloom.

Petiole: The stem that attaches the leaf to the main stem.

Photosynthesis: The production of food in plants through a complex chemical reaction involving light, water, and carbon dioxide.

Pistil: The seed-bearing female portion of the flower that consists of ovaries, style, and stigma.

Plantlet: An immature plant; either still on the "mother" leaf or potted individually.

Plant types: African violet plant types include miniature, semiminature, standard, and large in single crown or trailers.

Pollen: The fertile yellow powder released from the anther.

Progeny: The offspring of any type of cross.

Propagate: To produce, or cause to produce, new plants.

Rooted clump: A term used by commercial growers that refers to a group of plantlets attached to the leaf cutting (mother leaf).

Rosette: A cluster of leaves radiating symmetrically from a central stem.

Seedling: A young plant grown from seed.

Sepal: Individual segments, similar to petals, covering the bloom, part of the calyx.

Slip-potting: Placing a plant into a clean pot of the same size to hide any disfigurement or dirt on the pot.

Species: A subdivision of a genus (Gesneriaceae), i.e., *Streptocarpus* or *Saintpaulia*.

Sphagnum moss: A long-fibered moss in a less decomposed state than that of sphagnum peat moss. It is often used in its natural, unmilled state as a growing medium for plants in hanging baskets.

Sport: Plants that have developed new features not seen in the parent plant. This can occur naturally or be chemically induced.

Stamen: A stalk or filament bearing an anther at its tip to hold the pollen.

Starter plants: Immature plants in small pots (usually 2 1/2") are sometimes referred to as "starter plants" by commercial growers.

Stem: The main stalk or trunk of a plant.

Stigma: A sticky receptive surface to which pollen adheres; part of the pistil.

Style: This elevates the stigma into a favorable position for pollen collection, part of the pistil.

Sucker: The beginning of a new plant that forms near the base of a plant or in the lower axils.

Symmetry: The shape of the plant. In rosette types of African violets, the leaves should radiate from the center of the plant like spokes on a wheel. The degree of perfect duplication and overlapping of the foliage evenly spaced around the main stem of the plant. It includes straight petioles with each layer of leaves progressively larger than the preceding layer.

Systemic: Relating to the entire plant system, not a single part. A systemic chemical is a substance that, when absorbed by plant tissue, causes the tissue to be poisonous to certain pests and diseases. Soil drenching is the usual method of induction.

Tissue culture: Test tube propagation using a culture medium and producing hundreds of plants from a minute piece of plant tissue.

Vermiculite: A sterile, lightweight, brownish, soft-textured, pebbly material. It is manufactured from crushed mica ore expanded to many times its original size through intense heat.

Wetting agent: A solution that is mixed with water to reduce the surface tension that causes water to bead.

Wicking: Any material used to draw water from a reservoir into the soil of a potted plant.

Spraying Insecticide in My Birthday Suit

By Dale Martens Davenport, Iowa

I found several plastic “Happy Birthday” tablecloths on a sales table. It’s my odd thinking that gave me the idea to use a 50-cent bargain as a protective cover while I sprayed insecticide on my plants. For whatever reason — although I keep windows shut in the basement where my plants grow — spring weather seems to bring thrips, and products with spinosad help control them.



All dressed up and ready to spray. (The red area on my forehead is my bangs and I don’t worry about them getting chemicals because I shower immediately after spraying.)

I always remove flowers before spraying because they can harbor thrips.

I always remove flowers before spraying because they can harbor thrips. I cut a hole in the tablecloth that was not quite large enough to slide over my head, but I still could see clearly enough what I wanted to spray. In addition to the tablecloth, I wore plastic gloves, safety glasses, two masks, and long sleeves.

I turned off the fans in the room and went to work spraying under and on top of leaves. When finished, I closed the door to the plant room and stayed away from it for 24 hours. I repeated this effort in 3 days to catch newly hatched thrips. Research finds that the thrips life cycle lasts from 7 to 14 days, depending on room temperature. My husband took my photo before I began spraying and joked that I’d be spraying in my “birthday suit.”



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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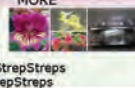
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